

**OFFICIAL MINUTES  
MONTEREY PARK PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
JULY 10, 2018**

The Planning Commission of the City of Monterey Park held a regular meeting of the Board in the Council Chambers, located at 320 West Newmark Avenue in the City of Monterey Park, Tuesday, July 10, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairperson Delario Robinson called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:**

Planner Tewasart called the roll:

Board Members Present: Delario Robinson, Eric Brossy De Dios, Theresa Amador, Ricky Choi, and Margaret Leung

Board Members Absent: None

**ALSO PRESENT:** Natalie Karpeles, Deputy City Attorney, Rey Alfonso, Assistant City Engineer, Vivian Chen, Associate Engineer, and Samantha Tewasart, Senior Planner

**AGENDA ADDITIONS, DELETIONS, CHANGES AND ADOPTIONS:** None

**ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS:**

Anna Van with Climate Resolve, a non-profit organization that works on environmental issues and climate change, was present to promote an event on Saturday, July 14, 2018 at 8:00 a.m. at Whittier Narrows Park to index the different type trees at the park to help with future urban forestry efforts and restoration and how to keep the city cooler through methods such as tree canopies.

[1.] **PRESENTATIONS:** None

[2.] **CONSENT CALENDAR:** None

[3.] **PUBLIC HEARING:**

**3-A EXEMPTION FROM THE PROVISIONS OF THE ZONING REGULATIONS IN THE MONTEREY PARK MUNICIPAL CODE (MPMC) TO ENCROACH INTO THE SIDE AND REAR-YARD SETBACKS AND TO EXCEED THE MAXIMUM LOT COVERAGE PERCENTAGE TO PROVIDE FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF TWO SOLAR PARKING CANOPIES/CARPORTS IN THE R-3 (HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL) ZONE – 318 SOUTH RAMONA AVENUE**

Assistant City Engineer Alfonso provided a brief summary of the staff report.

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Chairperson Robinson stated that there will be four other sites and this is the only one that requires the exemptions.

Representative Eilroma Sarkis, Senior Project Manager of Cenergy Power replied yes.

Chairperson Robinson stated that it will be significant savings to the City. Also, the City Council has entered into an agreement with Cenergy and in 2013 there was a Climate Action and in 2015 there was a Sustainable Community Element.

Commissioner Brossy de Dios inquired for clarification if the request is a front and rear setback and if any comments were received from the adjacent properties.

Planner Tewasart replied that the Planning Division did not receive any comments. Engineer Alfonso replied Engineering did not.

Commissioner Brossy de Dios stated that his concern is the potential for reflection and inquired if any study has been done since the surface is glass.

Representative Sarkis replied that the modules absorb the sunlight. There will be minimal reflect of light.

Commissioner Brossy de Dios inquired if the Building and Safety Division has reviewed the plan since the canopy is at zero setbacks.

Representative Sarkis replied that preliminary comments have been provided by the Planning Division in the agreement phase, but a full permit package has not been submitted to Building and Safety.

Commissioner Leung inquired about the notification. Attorney Karpeles replied that this is not a variance this is an exemption to the zoning code, so technically it does not require that there be a public hearing. One was held in an abundance of caution and it has been agendized to provide every opportunity for the Commission to ask questions and to hear back from the residents, but because it is not technically something that is held as a public hearing the notification requirements that were put in place were more courtesy notices. The notifications that we would typically do if there was a variance or if there was some type of request from an applicant related to a planning a project.

Commissioner Leung inquired about the different between an exemption and a variance. Attorney Karpeles replied that a variance would require that there be specific findings made and is governed by certain statutory requirements. What the City has created is an exemption in the Municipal Code to certain provisions of its zoning ordinance. What we have here is an exemption for government buildings in certain instances because the Library is considered a government building or a government facility, if the Commission makes certain findings related to the project it can exempt any of the improvements thereon from strict requirements held in the zoning code as opposed to a variance which is controlled by State statute and requires that certain findings be made under State statues as well as the City's codes.

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Commissioner Amador inquired if the carport that faces the residential property will have a visual impact. Representative Sarkis replied that the carports will be 14 feet in height. Commissioner Amador inquired if the City is renting or buying the solar panels. Representative Sarkis replied that it is a power purchasing agreement. They will design and procure it for the City and be the power provider for that term. They will own it and lease the power to the City. Engineer Alfonso stated that the City will not own the structures itself. The City is merely providing the space for the structures to stand. They will monitor and maintain it for the term of the agreement.

Commissioner Amador inquired if there was an earthquake and one of the solar panels had to be replaced how that would work. Representative Sarkis replied that they would have to conduct a structural analysis on the canopy. If there is a simple module to be replaced they will go through the process of de-energizing everything and replacing it. Typically they procure additional modules for circumstances of this sort. Commissioner Amador inquired if that would be an additional cost. Representative Sarkis replied that he did not have that information. Commissioner Amador inquired if staff could check on that.

Commissioner Brossy de Dios inquired if they looked at placing panels on the rooftop of the existing library facility. Representative Sarkis replied that they did and it was not feasible.

Commissioner Leung stated that it would have been helpful to have a drawing to show the visual impact to the adjacent property. She recommended continuing the project and bringing it back with elevations and providing mailing notifications to the adjacent properties.

Attorney Karpeles stated that an approval or continuance of the resolution would require an action by the Commission, so if Commissioner Leung wants to make a motion to have the item continued that is something that the Planning Commission could consider and either approve or if there is no second then there would have to be consideration of the resolution as written considering the modifications that were discussed a few moments earlier.

Commissioner Leung stated that she had a few more questions. With regards to the optimal placement of the panels it was mentioned that a study was conducted comparing placing the panels on the rooftop versus the way it is proposed now and inquired about the about efficiencies with placing the panels on the north and east sides versus on the rooftop. She inquired about the width of the panels. Representative Sarkis replied that they are 6 feet by 3 feet at a 5 percent tilt. They do have a side view on the C-2 drawing that gives a view of it. It does not show the high point calculation, but they can show that.

Chairperson Robinson inquired how long the company has been in business. Representative Sarkis replied since 2008. Chairperson Robinson stated that the panels are setup for maximum energy reduction and 14 feet is the height of a fire truck.

Engineer Alfonso replied that the solar panels are heavy structures and the building roof may not have the structural capacity to support something of this nature. A great benefit would be the shade on top of being better for the environment and the energy production.

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Commissioner Brossy de Dios stated that is important to meet the requirement of conclusion A in the resolution stating that they have attempted to work within the perimeters of the zoning code elsewhere and were not able to do it. He inquired about the necessity to encroach into the front setback. The rear setback he can understand because of the fire lane. Other than desiring to cover the last two or three last parking stalls is there any compelling reason that the canopy needs to be in the front setback. Representative Sarkis replied that the goal is to meet a certain off-set through the negotiation with Cenergy Power and the City. The Library has a large utility bill and higher rate schedule, so to meet that offset those are the number of panels that are required to make sure they hit that production mark.

Commissioner Brossy de Dios stated that the carport on the adjacent property to the north appears to be setback 10 feet from the front setback. Representative Sarkis replied that they did pre-engineering work on this project. They did a topographic and picked-up all the landmarks, curbs, parking stalls, structures, and light towers and overlaid it on the site plan.

Chairperson Robinson opened the public hearing.

Chairperson Robinson closed the public hearing.

**Action Taken:** The Planning Commission after considering the evidence presented during the public hearing **approved** the requested exemptions.

**Motion:** Moved, by Commissioner Brossy de Dios and seconded by Commissioner Choi, with modifications including 1) page 2, section 1, subsection D of the resolution, seventh line from the top of the page should read, "...will encroach 15 feet into the minimum 25-foot front setback;..." 2) page 2, section 1, subsection F, third line from the top of the paragraph should read, "...the minimum required 25-foot front setback and 5-foot rear setback," and 3) page 3 section 4, fifth line into the paragraph, would read, "...approves the 15-foot encroachment into the required front-yard setback;..." and the page numbers be corrected to match the number of pages 4 in total, motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners: Robinson, Amador, Choi, and Brossy de Dios  
Noes: Commissioners: None  
Absent: Commissioners: None  
Abstain: Commissioners: Leung

**[4.] OLD BUSINESS:** None

**[5.] NEW BUSINESS:** None

**[6.] COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS AND MATTERS:**

Commissioner Brossy de Dios stated that he will be on vacation the next meeting.

Commissioner Leung inquired about work occurring on Monterey Pass Road right by the Vagabond area. It seems South California Edison is adding additional height to the utility poles. Engineer Alfonso replied that he is not aware of any specific projects that Edison is

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undertaking there. They are actively replacing old wooden poles all around town and permits are issued frequently for them to do that. Commissioner Leung inquired if there was coordination between that and the proposed bike lane project that was approved for that area. Engineer Alfonso replied no.

Commissioner Leung inquired about the status of the bike lane project. Engineer Alfonso replied that they have not yet begun design. They are preparing a request for proposals for a consultant to provide the design for the project. They are also waiting the possibility that there may be additional funding available for that project. The I-710 Freeway tunnel project Metro elected not to fund that project, so there is funding that all the neighboring cities are vying for. The City has submitted a list of projects that would alleviate traffic that we see in Monterey Park and depending on how much money we are going to receive from Metro they would like to apply some of that to the Monterey Pass Road bike project. One of the improvements that they would like to include into the project is sidewalk improvements. It is all dependent on the amount of monies that we will receive from Metro at this point in time.

Commissioner Leung inquired about the South Garfield Village project where there is to be a gold line station going into that area and the timeline. Engineer Alfonso replied that a few years ago they saw proposals for the extension of the Metro gold line east and a proposed Metro station there adjacent to the freeway there on Garfield Avenue. The purpose of the improvements we see down on Garfield Avenue is to provide some connectivity to a possible future train station, but he is not aware of a specific timeline or whether it was even been approved.

Commissioner Leung inquired if a status can be provided at the next meeting since the City has already spent money beautifying that area. Engineer Alfonso replied that the long-term goal is to provide connectivity to a train station, but ahead of that, the improvements that have been made on South Garfield are intended to encourage economic development and we are seeing that a little bit now as more business owners are seeing the possibilities of opening businesses there. That is the immediate impacts of the improvements there, but long term would be to provide connection to a future possible gold line station.

**[7.] STAFF COMMUNICATIONS AND MATTERS:** None

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business for consideration, the Planning Commission meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Next regular scheduled meeting on July 24, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

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Michael A. Huntley  
Director of Community and Economic Development

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